

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-10 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 IO-03 DRC-01 /057 W

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P 190815Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5855

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 7984

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, AF, PK

SUBJECT: IMPACT IN KABUL OF BHUTTO'S ESCALATING RHETORIC

SUMMARY: AFGHANS HAVE BEEN SHARPLY STUNG BY BHUTTO'S PUBLIC INVITATION TO EX-KING ZAHIR TO "VISIT PAKISTAN AND TOUR THE TRIBAL AREAS," AND BY PERSONAL ATTACKS ON PRESIDENT DAOUD AND HIS BROTHER. BHUTTO'S COMMENTS SEEM ONLY CALCULATED FURTHER TO EMBITTER ALREADY STRAINED AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS AND ENDANGER US INTEREST IN REGIONAL STABILITY. END SUMMARY.

1. I MADE MY FIRST CALL ON DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER WAHID ABDULLAH NOVEMBER 18 AND FOUND IN SOMBER MOOD. AFTER EXTREMELY FRIENDLY EXCHANGE OF AMENITIES, HE LAUNCHED INTO SOBERING COMMENTS ON BHUTTO'S RECENT SPEECHES DURING HIS TOUR OF THE NWFP, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS "DELIBERATELY PROVOCATIVE.

2. ABDULLAH GAVE US AN ENGLISH TRANSCRIPT OF RADIO REPORTS FROM
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PESHAWAR, KARACHI, AND ISLAMABAD ON WHICH AFGHAN REACTIONS ARE

BASED. HE UNDERScoreD TWO "COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE" PASSAGES, BOTH OF WHICH HAD BEEN BROADCAST ON NOVEMBER 14. RADIO PESHAWAR PUSHTO SERVICE AT 6:15 P.M. HAD STATED "BHUTTO . . . HAS SAID HE HAS INVITED HIS MAJESTY MOHAMMAD ZAHIR SHAH THE EX-KING OF AFGHANISTAN TO MAKE A TRIP TO PAKISTAN AND VISIT THE TRIBAL AREAS . . . AS A GUEST OF THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT." FRANCE PRESS WAS QUOTED BY RADIO ISLAMABAD ON NOVEMBER 14 AS STATING (INTRA-ALIA) "BHUTTO TOLD THE AUDIENCE (IN A SPEECH IN NAIWAGY, NWFP) THAT IT LOOKS AS IF PRESIDENT DAOUD AND HIS BROTHER SARDAR MAHAMMAD NAIM HAVE 'HOT BLOOD' IN THEIR VEINS."

3. ABDULLAH MADE PARTICULAR POINT OF FACT THAT BHUTTO SEEMED TO BE FOLLOWING BRITISH COLONIAL PRACTICE OF STIRRING UP "UNREST" IN AFGHANISTAN BY TECHNIQUE OF USING DISCREDITED, OUSTED RULERS AS IMPLICIT THREAT TO AFGHAN REGIME. HE DISMISSED POSSIBILITY THAT EX-KING ZAHIR MIGHT ACCEPT BHUTTO'S INVITATION AS ABSOLUTELY UNTHINKABLE, BUT SAID BHUTTO'S WORDS SHOW LENGTH TO WHICH HE IS GOING TO TRY PROVOKE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT. HE ALSO TOOK SPECIAL UMBRAGE AT "PERSONAL ATTACKS ON PRESIDENT DAOUD AND HIS BROTHER."

4. ABDULLAH SAID GOA WAS ITSELF BEING VERY RESTRAINED IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND DID NOT INTEND TO GET INTO AN ESCALATING PROPAGANDA EXCHANGE WITH PAKISTAN WHICH WOULD ONLY EXACERBATE SITUATION. NO FORMAL PROTEST TO GOP IS PLANNED. HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO MY REFERENCE TO OUR RECENT EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE DIRECT HIGH-LEVEL CONTACT BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, ABDULLAH DISMISSED UTILITY OF ANY SUCH CONTACTS IN PRESENT ATMOSPHERE. HE STRESSED THAT BASIC PROBLEM WAS THAT NO ONE COULD HAVE ANY CONFIDENCE IN BHUTTO'S WORD FROM ONE DAY TO THE NEXT, AS HE SWUNG WILDLY BACK AND FORTH. IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, THERE COULD BE NO POSSIBILITY OF RESPONSIBLE DISCUSSIONS.

5. AS DEPT AWARE, I WILL BE PRESENTING MY CREDENTIALS ON NOVEMBER 21. I FULLY ANTICIPATE TO HEAR MORE FROM DAOUD ABOUT THESE ATTACKS BY BHUTTO IN SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATION WHICH ABDULLAH PREDICTED WOULD FOLLOW FORMAL CEREMONY.

6. ALL INDICATIONS HERE ARE THAT AFGHANS ARE NOW GENUINELY ANXIOUS TO AVOID PROVOKING HOSTILITIES OR CONFRONTATION WITH PAKISTAN AT THIS TIME. BHUTTO COULD CONCLUDE THIS REFLECTS SUCCESS OF HIS RECENT CONFIDENTIAL

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TOUGH PUBLIC LINE. HE COULD BE RIGHT IN VERY SHORT RUN. BUT RECENT INCREASED FLOW OF SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING REFLECTS AFGHAN DETERMINATION GET IN BETTER POSITION TO "DEFEND AFGHAN HONOR" IN NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE, AND PUSHTUNS HAVE VERY LONG MEMORIES.

7. AS REPORTED, BHUTTO'S REMARKS GO WELL BEYOND LEVEL OF TOLERANCE FOR ANY GOVERNMENT, MUCH LESS A PROUD AND SENSITIVE ONE LIKE THE GOA.

SURELY HE KNOWS HIS WORDS RESOUND LOUDLY IN KABUL EVEN WHEN
OSTENSIBLY DIRECTED TOWARD INTERNAL AUDIENCES. HE SHOULD, IF
POSSIBLE, BE LEFT WITH NO UNCERTAINTY ABOUT OUR OWN VIEW OF SUCH
PROVOCATIVE STATEMENTS. WHILE WE DO NOT AND SHOULD NOT ESPOUSE
QUIXOTIC AFGHAN PUSHTUNISTAN CAUSE, I AM SURE EMBASSY ISLAMABAD CAN
FIND WAYS TO SUGGEST THAT A DIFFERENT TONE IN THE DIALOGUE WITH
AFGHANISTAN IS MORE LIKELY TO AVOID SERIOUS TROUBLE FOR ALL OF
US WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT STABILITY OF THIS REGION.
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